

a way that the coupling element (4) at least partially surrounds the instrument shaft (1) while clamping said instrument shaft (1).

5. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 4 ~~at least one of claims 2 to 4~~, wherein the coupling element (4) is configured as an essentially spherical component equipped with a penetration bore hole (8) for the instrument shaft (1) and the tensioning device (7) of the handle (3) is configured as a bearing for rotatable storage of the coupling element (4).

6. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 5, wherein the coupling element (4) configured as a spherical component has, at least one side, an aperture (9) running from the outer perimeter to the penetration bore hole (8) and configured in the axial direction of the instrument shaft (1).

7. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 5, wherein the spherical coupling element (4) consists of at least two spherical segments divided in the axial direction of the instrument shaft (1).

8. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 7 ~~at least one of claims 2 to 7~~, wherein the coupling element (4) consists of a compressible material, especially a rubber or plastic material.

9. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 7 ~~either of claims 6 or 7~~, wherein the coupling element (4) consists of a non-compressible material, in particular a hard synthetic or metallic material.

10. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as claim 9 ~~in at least one of claims 4 to 9~~, wherein the handle (3) has two handgrips (5) on the proximal side, so that at least one handgrip (5) is positioned so that it can pivot around a swivel axis (6) with respect to the other handgrip (5).

11. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 10 ~~at least one of claims 3 to 10~~, wherein the handle (3) can be stopped in a closed position, in which the coupling element (4) is clamped together with the instrument shaft (1).

12. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 11, wherein a stopping device (13) is positioned on the handle (3) to stop the handle (3) in the closed position.

13. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 12, wherein the stopping device (13) is configured as a screw thread (15) in the area of the tensioning device (7).

14. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 12, wherein the stopping device (13) is configured as an eccentric lock in the area of the tensioning device (7).

15. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 14 ~~at least one of claims 5 to 14~~, wherein the rotatable storage of the coupling element (4) can be restricted in the tensioning device (7) by means of a lock pin (14).

16. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 15 ~~at least one of claims 1 to 15~~, with a tool positioned on the distal end of the instrument shaft (1), which tool can be activated by the handle (3), wherein the tool (2) can be activated by the handgrip (5) of the handle (3), so that the handle (3) and the tool (2) are connected to one another by at least one power transmission device (16).

17. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 16, wherein the at least one power transmission device (16) is configured as a flexible power transmission element, in particular as a Bowden cable (17).

18. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 16, wherein the at least one power transmission device (16) is hydraulically powered.

19. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 18 ~~at least one of claims 16 to 18~~, wherein, in addition to the activation of the tool (2) by the handgrips (5) of the handle (3), the tensioning device (7) can also be activated by the handgrips (5) of the handle (3).

20. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 19, wherein the activation of the tensioning device (7) by the handgrips (5) of the handle (3) can be uncoupled from the activation of the tool (2) by the handgrips (5) of the handle (3).

21. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 20, wherein the two activation functions that can be exerted by the handgrips (5) of the handle (3) can be uncoupled in such a way that in the selection of one activation function the other activation function is automatically shut off.

22. (Currently Amended) A medical instrument as in claim 21, wherein a transfer device for shutting off the activation function that can be exerted by the handgrips (5) of the handle (3) is positioned on the handle (3).